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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 11239

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TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: BASIC BIO DATA ON JUDGES HEARING MRS. GANDHI'S CASE

REFS: A. STATE 191990

B. NEW DELHI 11224

1. AGIT NATH RAY: RAY, 63, HAS BEEN CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA SINCE APRIL 1973. HE WAS BORN IN CALCUTTA IN AN UPPER-CASTE HINDU FAMILY. HE WAS EDUCATED IN INDIA AND BRITAIN (M.A., CALCUTTA U.; B.A., OXFORD; BARRISTER-AT-LAW, GARY'S INN). RAY WAS CALLED TO THE BAR IN 1939 AND PRACTICED AT THE CALCUTTA HIGH COURT UNTIL 1957, WHEN HE WAS APPOINTED A HIGH COURT JUDGE. IN 1969, HE WAS ELEVATED TO THE SUPREME COURT.

2. RAY'S 1973 APPOINTMENT AS CHIEF JUSTICE -- SUPERSEDING THREE JUDGES WHO PROMPTLY RESIGNED -- SPARKED AN INDIAN-WIDE CONTROVERSY. IT WAS PUBLICLY CRITICIZED BY MOST LAWYERS IN INDIA AND ALL POLITICAL PARTIES EXCEPT THE CONGRESS (R) AND THE PRO-MOSCOW CPI.

3. FRIENDS OF RAY SAY THAT THE WIDESPREAD CRITICISM OF HIS APPOINTMENT AS "POLITICAL" LEFT ITS MARK AND CONTRIBUTED TO RAY'S PARTICIPATION IN SUPREME COURT DECISIONS RELEASING SMUGGLERS ARRESTED UNDER MISA LATE LAST YEAR. CRITICS, HOWEVER, HAVE GOOD EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THEIR CLAIMS. RAY DISSENTED IN FAVOR OF THE GOVERNMENT IN A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT CASES, INCLUDING THE NATIONALIZATION ON MAJOR ONC IN 1969. HE SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT IN THE 1973 FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS CASE. HE EARLIER EXPRESSED A VIEW THAT "THE LEGISLATURE IS THE BEST JUDGE OF WHAT SHOULD SUBSERVE

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THE PUBLIC INTEREST." RAY IS MARRIED AND HAS ONE SON.

4. KUTTYIL KURIEN MATHEW: MATHEW, 66, WAS EDUCATED IN KERALA. HE PRACTICED LAW IN TRIVANDRUM FROM 1935 TO 1960, WHEN HE WAS APPOINTED ADVOCATE GENERAL OF KERALA. IN 1962, HE WAS ELEVATED TO THE KERALA HIGH COURT, AND IN 1971, MOVED TO THE SUPREME COURT. MATHEW IS THE ONLY CHRISTIAN ON THE SUPREME COURT. HE TEACHES LAW AT DELHI UNIVERSITY, IS MARRIED AND HAS ONE SON AND TWO DAUGHTERS. MATHEW HEADS THE COMMISSION INVESTIGATING THE CONTROVERSIAL ASSASSINATION OF RAILWAY MINISTER L.N. MISHRA.

5. YASHWANT VISHNU CHANDRACHUD: CHANDRACHUD, 55, WAS BORN IN POONA, MAHARASHTRA. HE WAS EDUCATED AT BOMBAY U. (B.A., LL.B.). CHANDRACHUD PRACTICED LAW AT THE BOMBAY HIGH COURT FROM 1943-1952. IN 1952, HE WAS APPOINTED ASSISTANT GOVERNMENT PLEADER AT THE HIGH COURT. IN 1961, HE WAS APPOINTED A JUSTICE OF THE BOMBAY HIGH COURT. HE MOVED TO THE SUPREME COURT IN 1972. CHANDRACHUD JOINED THE MAJORITY IN THE 1973 FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS DECISION "DECLARATION" (SEE REF B). HE IS MARRIED AND HAS A SON AND A DAUGHTER. (SEE ADDITIONAL BIOGRAPHIC NOTE ON CHANDRACHUD IN MAY 7, 1975 MEMCON ON ALLAHABAD COURT CASE.)

6. HANS RAJ KHANNA: KANNA, 63, IS A PUNJABI. HE BEGAN HIS LEGAL CAREER AS AN ADVOCATE IN AMRITSAR, PUNJAB. IN 1952 HE BECAME A DISTRICT AND SESSIONS JUDGE IN FEROZEPUR. IN 1962 HE WAS A DISTRICT JUDGE IN NEW DELHI. AFTER A BRIEF PERIOD AS A HIGH COURT JUDGE IN THE PUNJAB, HE WAS APPOINTED TO THE DELHI HIGH COURT IN 1966. IN 1969 HE WAS NAMED CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE DELHI HIGH COURT. IN 1971 HE WAS ELEVATED TO THE SUPREME COURT. IN THE 1973 FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS CASE, KHANNA TOOK A STRONG STAND AGAINST THE PARLIAMENT'S RIGHT TO ALTER THE BASIC STRUCTURE OR FRAMEWORK OF THE CONSTITUTION. KHANNA IS MARRIED AND HAS THREE SONS.

7. MIRZA HAMEEDULLAH BEG: SON OF A FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE OF HYDERABAD, MR. BEG, 60 YEARS, HAILS FROM A NAWAB MUSLIM FAMILY OF LUCKNOW, AN IMPORTANT CENTER OF MUSLIM CULTURE IN INDIA HE IS THE ONLY MUSLIM ON THE SUPREME COURT. BEG OBTAINED A B.A. AT AN UTTAR PRADESH UNIVERSITY, HE CONTINUED HIS EDUCATION IN ENGLAND EARNING A MASTER OF ARTS FROM TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, IN 1936. HE QUALIFIED FOR BAR-AT-LAW FROM LINCOLN'S INN IN 1940. AFTER HIS RETURN TO INDIA, MR. BEG PRACTICED LAW AT THE MEERUT CONFIDENTIAL

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AND ALLAHABAD COURTS IN THE EARLY 1940'S. FROM 1946 TO 1963, HE TAUGHT AT ALLAHABAD UNIVERSITY. IN 1963 HE WAS APPOINTED JUDGE OF THE ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT. HE BECAME CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE HIMACHAL PRADESH HIGH COURT IN 1971. IN DECEMBER 1971 HE WAS ELEVATED TO THE SUPREME COURT. MR. BEG IS A MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL LAW ASSOCIATION AND OF THE WORLD ASSEMBLY OF JUDGES. HE IS MARRIED AND HAS THREE SONS AND ONE DAUGHTER. SAXBE

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